

REMARKS

By this Response, claim 1 has been amended and claim 9 has been canceled due to its incorporation into independent claim 1. Previously withdrawn claims 22-25 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein. Claims 1-8, 10-21 and 26 are pending.

Interview Summary

At the outset, the Examiner is thanked for the consideration given during the Interview which took place on January 3, 2008. It is understood that the Examiner will forward an Interview Summary for Applicants' records. During the Interview, the Examiner indicated that the claim amendments provided on December 18, 2007 overcame the references of record. In addition, the Examiner requested that claim 1 be amended to recite that the substrate was a dielectric layer, as found in now canceled dependent claim 9. Finally, the Examiner requested that the undersigned point out support in the specification for the claim amendments of December 18, 2007.

Comments

In response to the Examiner's request, it is respectfully submitted that the claim language "providing a microelectronic device, the aluminum oxide etch stop layer positioned between the microelectronic device and dielectric layer" is found in at least lines 1-2 of paragraph [0025], lines 1-3 of paragraph [0026], and lines 1-5 of paragraph [0028].

The claim language "and without overetching said etch stop layer into said microelectronic device and without introducing hydrogen into the process" is found in at least lines 13-18 of paragraph [0029], and lines 6-9 of paragraph [0021].

The claim language "without providing an additional barrier layer between the semiconductor devices and dielectric layer" is found in at least lines 11-15 of paragraph [0005].

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that all claims now present in the application are in condition for allowance.

If the Examiner believes that additional discussions or information might advance the prosecution of the instant application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below to expedite resolution of any outstanding issues.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 20-0668.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: January 4, 2007

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